

Techniques that Work

We Learn...

- 10%...of What We Read
- 20%...of What We Hear
- 30%...of What We See
- 50%...of What We See and Hear
- 70%...of What We Discuss With Others
- 80%...of What We Experience Personally
- 95%...of What We Teach Others

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It has been estimated that it takes only three or four minutes for the average person to form a positive or negative first impression. What does this mean to a tutor? Make that first meeting with your tutee a positive experience. Be consistent in body, voice and words. Initiate eye contact. Listen with your body by smiling and nodding your head. Nonverbal messages are the most powerful form of communication. Take the communication skills test and find out how your communication skills rank. Establishing rapport with your tutee is very important. You can help create a good rapport by listening patiently and remaining open to what the tutee has to say.

It is also important to know why the student has requested tutoring. Some students know exactly where they are having trouble. Some students point out general areas of difficulty. Some students can only vaguely describe the source of their confusion. To help these students, simply ask them where they are having problems. It could be that they fear the subject because of past failure. It could be that they are taking the class because it is a requirement; therefore they have no interest in the subject. The students could also be lacking confidence in their ability to master the material, or they could be overwhelmed by the time requirements imposed on them for this particular class. The reason for the tutoring request is important because it will give you a focus to plan your future tutoring sessions.

Another approach to finding out why the student is seeking assistance is to review the course materials with the student. Use the course outline, text, or assignments to figure out precisely where the student is having problems. Ask questions that encourage students to state what they know about the material.

A technique critical to a successful tutoring session is the ability to ask the right question. There are many types of questions that a tutor can use in a tutoring session. Good questioning techniques are essential to a successful tutoring session. It is important to use the right words. Try asking "What do you understand?" If you ask students what they don't understand, they will be clueless. Another important aspect of asking questions is waiting for an answer. Many tutors are too quick to answer their own questions. Give students an opportunity to reflect on the question before they volunteer a response. Always wait at least 20 seconds for the student to answer your question. This "wait time" might be uncomfortable at first, but it can greatly improve the tutoring session.

Remember to ask leading questions. Questions that can be answered with yes/no have less value

that those that ask the student to demonstrate understanding. "What if" questions and analogies are excellent strategies for expanding student understanding. Become familiar with the Socratic Method of teaching. It is the oldest, but still the most powerful teaching tactic for fostering critical thinking.

Tutors can perform a valuable service when they assist students to figure out answers by themselves. There are three steps that can help you provide this service: Provide instruction, require a response, and give feedback. In other words, present the information briefly, have the student respond and talk about the material, let the student know when the answer is correct or incorrect. Learning to handle right and wrong answers is a vital part of tutoring.

In addition, you might want to look at some tips on how to motivate your students to learn. The two most important factors that lead to student success are a strong motivation to succeed and good learning skills.